

## ASK A REL RESPONSE: DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION FOR A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WITH DYSLEXIA

*I'm happy to respond to your request for peer-reviewed research on effective methods of instruction for dyslexic students in high school, specifically how to differentiate instruction for a student who struggles with silent reading.*

The [Institute of Education Sciences \(IES\)](#) adheres to rigorous research standards, and we always look to it first to find resources for our requestors. In this case, we searched IES's What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) using the term "dyslexia" in the [Children and Youth with Disabilities](#) category. This search produced reports about the effectiveness of 13 interventions, five of which may be suitable for use at the high school level. However, none was found to have positive effects, in all but one case because the research was insufficient to support any conclusions on the subject:

- **Alphabetic Phonics** is an ungraded, multisensory curriculum distributed by School Specialty Intervention (formerly Educators Publishing Service) that teaches the structure of the English language and can be taught to individuals or small groups of elementary or secondary school students. The researchers found no relevant studies that met WWC evidence standards and were therefore unable to draw any research-based conclusions about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the program.
- **Barton Reading & Spelling System®** is a one-to-one tutoring system designed to improve the reading, writing, and spelling skills of children, teenagers, or adults who struggle due to dyslexia or other learning disability. The researchers found no relevant studies that met WWC evidence standards and were therefore unable to draw any research-based conclusions about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the program.
- **Orton-Gillingham** interventions are broad, multisensory approaches to teaching reading and spelling that can be modified for individual or group instruction at all reading levels. The researchers found no relevant studies that met WWC evidence standards and were therefore unable to draw any research-based conclusions about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the program.
- The **Wilson Reading System®** is a reading and writing program developed by Barbara Wilson and distributed by Wilson Language Training. It provides a curriculum for teaching reading and spelling to individuals of any age who have difficulty with written language. The researchers found no relevant studies that met WWC evidence standards and were therefore unable to draw any research-based conclusions about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the program.
- **Project Read®** is a multisensory language arts curriculum designed for use in a classroom or group setting; it has three strands: Phonics/Linguistics, Reading Comprehension, and Written Expression,

which are integrated at all grade levels, though the emphasis of the specific strands differs by grade. The intervention was found to have no discernible effects on general reading achievement for students with learning disabilities.

In the absence of positive findings from the What Works Clearinghouse, IES's [ERIC Clearinghouse](#) can provide leads to other materials of interest, but we cannot attest to the quality of all of the research you may find there. Our advice is to look first for IES or other Department of Education publications, then for peer-reviewed articles.

You may also find some useful information in the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide, [Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices](#) though it does not discuss dyslexia specifically.

Finally, we suggest that you explore the websites of two national centers funded by the Department of Education:

- The [Center on Instruction](#). A search on “adolescent literacy” will lead to potentially useful resources.
- The [National High School Center](#). Among other resources is an [annotated bibliography of research on high school literacy](#).

*This Ask A REL response was developed by REL Mid-Atlantic under Contract ED-IES-12-CO-0006 from the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. The content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.*